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March 2, 2012

Dear Chairpersons Slossberg and Morin and Members of the Government Administration and Election Committee,

I am submitting this letter in support of keeping the Connecticut Israel Exchange Commission (CONNIX) an independent Commission without merging it into the Department of Economic and Community Development (DECD). After talking to representatives in the Governor's Office following the Governor's initial suggestion to include CONNIX on his list of Commissions to eliminate, the Governor's Bill 5027 was introduced which included provisions to preserve the mission of CONNIX. Unfortunately however, the Governor's bill appears to merge CONNIX into DECD which would in effect, eliminate the CONNIX Commission as we have known it.

The attached Article from the Jewish Virtual Library explains the strong relationships between Connecticut companies and the State of Israel. In the past, CONNIX has been extremely helpful in providing information, facilitating relationships, leading trade missions, promoting business relationships, and keeping dialogue open to trade opportunities. Under Governor Rell, a CONNIX chairperson was not re-appointed so the Commission was restricted in its activities. Prior to the Rell Administration however, the Commission flourished, raised money from private sources to assist in its efforts, and at one point, even had a part time staff member who was part of the Department of Economic Development.

The Governor's objective of developing high tech, bio-medical, and "green" environmental facilities, and preserving our defense related industries, is absolutely consistent with efforts to foster trade with Israel. These are areas in which Israel excels as a world leader, which is why Connecticut companies have been able to secure business relationships with companies in Israel. As the Article points out, Israel now ranks as Connecticut's 24th largest trade partner, with over 250 Connecticut companies trading with Israeli companies. This is a trade relationship that benefits our State and we should do everything possible to promote it. CONNIX is a key to the expansion of that relationship. Thank you for your consideration.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "David Baram".

David A. Baram
State Representative

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Cooperation Between Israel and the State of Connecticut

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Trade and Population Statistics: [top](#)

Exports to Israel in 2011:	\$179,887,894.00
Percentage change from 2010:	+20.1

Israel's rank as trade partner:	19
Total exports since 1996:	\$1,602,416,692.00
Military Contracts with Israel in 2010 Using Foreign Military Financing:	\$55,398,227.73
Jewish Population in 2011:	116,050
Jewish Percentage of Total Population:	3.2

Binational foundation grants shared by Connecticut and Israel: [top](#)

<u>Binational Agricultural Research and Development Fund (1979-2010):</u>	\$1,238,832
<u>Binational Science Foundation (1996-2009):</u>	\$5,608,855
<u>Binational Industrial Research and Development Foundation (1977-2010):</u>	\$1,783,308

Grant recipients in Connecticut from U.S.-Israel binational foundations:

Alcide Corp.
 Canberra Industries Inc.
 CAS Medical Systems Inc.
 Corometrics Medical Inc.
 Executone Information Systems
 General DataComm
 Hydrofera
 Kollmorgen Motion Tech.
 Lansco Inc.
 MacDermid Inc.
 Micromint Inc.
 Packet/PC Inc.
 Presstek Inc.
 Timex Corp.
 TranSwitch Corp.
 University of Connecticut

University of Connecticut Med School
VA Medical Center
Yale University
Yale Medical School

Bilateral Institutions [top](#)

Connecticut - Israel Exchange Commission- Established in the late 1980's by Connecticut's Department of Economic and Community Development, the CONNIX was created with the inherent purpose of promoting and expanding economic, scientific, educational, technological, commercial, industrial and cultural cooperation and exchange between Connecticut and Israel. Then-Governor William O'Neill signed the agreement that officially created CONNIX. In recent years, unfortunately, CONNIX has no longer received state funds though State Representative David Baram is hoping to resurrect CONNIX. Read the agreement that established CONNIX, [CLICK HERE](#).

Cooperative Agreements - "Memoranda of Understanding" [top](#)

September 2005 - Sikorsky Aircraft, based in Stratford, signed an MOU with the government of Israel to develop the Armed Blackhawk (ABH) helicopter, also known as the BattleHawk, for use by the Israeli Air Force. In 2009, Sikorsky announced that the test phase for the ABH was complete which paves the way to upgrade the IAF's existing fleet of BlackHawk helicopters currently in use. Read more about the project, [CLICK HERE](#).

Connecticut Government Missions to Israel [top](#)

April 2010 - Congressman Joe Courtney (D-CT) led a very successful economic trade mission to Israel that included businesspeople from at least one dozen Connecticut companies and organizations. The goal of the mission was to promote long-term economic growth and job

creation by growing export opportunities for small and mid-sized companies by developing a mutually beneficial relationship with Israel. "This mission to Israel is about creating long-term economic opportunities and jobs for a more sustainable and robust Connecticut economy," stated Courtney. "I want to help open doors for Connecticut companies who otherwise have no global reach or resources to bridge the international divide." Anne Evans, District Director of the US Department of Commerce's Export Assistance Center in Middletown, added, "Our trade mission to Israel will serve as the vehicle to proactively open up the Israeli market to our state's companies." Read more about the mission at the blog of the International Trade Administration, [CLICK HERE](#).

March 2008 - Senator Joe Lieberman joined Senators John McCain (R-AZ) and Lindsey Graham (R-SC) on an official congressional visit to Israel to learn more about regional threats in the Middle East and ways in which the United States and Israel can collaborate on responses. While in Israel, the trio of senators met with Israeli Vice Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Tzipi Livni who stressed the importance of dealing with the rising tide of Islamic extremism. "It is impossible to achieve peace without dealing with the fundamental issues of terrorism and extreme Islamism. A change in Gaza is essential," said Minister Livni. Read more about this high level meeting, [CLICK HERE](#).

Partners For Change ^{top}

The U.S.-Israel relationship is based on the twin pillars of shared values and mutual interests. Given this commonality of interests and beliefs, it should not be surprising that support for Israel is one of the most pronounced and consistent foreign policy values of the American people.

The two nations cooperate on a wide variety of projects that reinforce our common beliefs. These *SHARED VALUE INITIATIVES* cover everything from energy to science to education to health.

Today's interdependent global economy requires that trade policy be developed at the national *and* state level. Many states have recognized the opportunity for realizing significant benefits by seeking to increase trade with Israel. No fewer than 23 states have cooperative

agreements with Israel.

In 1988, the Connecticut-Israel Exchange Commission was established to promote economic, scientific, educational, technological, commercial, industrial and cultural cooperation and exchange.

Today, trade with Israel is flourishing. Since 1996, Connecticut has exported more than \$1.4 billion worth of goods. In 2010 alone, the total exceeded \$148 million. Israel now ranks as Connecticut's 24th largest trade partner.

Additionally, Connecticut companies received more than \$55 million in 2010 for U.S. government-funded military contracts with Israel through the Foreign Military Financing (FMF) program (U.S. military assistance to Israel). Some companies that received contracts with Israel through FMF include Helicopter Support, Inc based out of Trumbull and Slickbar Products Corporation in Seymour.

Israel is certainly a place where potential business and trade partners can be found. It can also be a source, however, for innovative programs and ideas for addressing problems facing the citizens of Connecticut.

Israel has developed a number of pioneering education programs. For example, AICE introduced an innovative Israeli peer tutoring program to North Carolina that educators adapted for use in the United States. Now known as Reading Together, the program is used in 28 states. The program is designed to help students achieve reading fluency and is mostly used for children in second grade. The hope is that with its implementation, increasing numbers of students will perform at grade level or above.

A range of other exciting approaches to social problems like unemployment, environmental protection and drug abuse have been successfully implemented in Israel and could be imported for the benefit of Americans.

The potential for greater cooperation with Israel for the benefit of Connecticut is limited only by the imagination.

Connecticut Firms Profit From Business With Israel ^{top}

As the only country with free trade agreements with both the United States and the European community, Israel can act as a bridge for international trade between the United States and Europe. Moreover, because of the deep pool of talent, particularly in hightechnology areas, Israel provides excellent investment opportunities. Some of the nation's largest companies, such as IBM, Microsoft, Motorola and Intel have found that it is indeed profitable to do business in Israel.

More than 250 Connecticut companies have also discovered the benefits of trade with Israel. Several own interests in Israeli companies or have subsidiaries there, including MacDermid, Brink's, General Electric and Branson Ultrasonics.

For example, in addition to the funds already given to Connecticut companies through the FMF program, Pratt & Whitney Military Engines, based out of East Hartford, has been chosen as one of the principle contractors in a US Congressional deal to send as much as \$15.2 billion worth of F-35 Joint Strike Fighter Aircraft to the Israeli government. Being chosen as a principle contractor in this deal is a major achievement for the Connecticut-based firm which will be required to run multiple trips to Israel involving US government representatives in order to hammer down the specific technical details and training. Read more about this deal, [CLICK HERE](#).

The Connecticut-Israel Exchange Commission, which is located in the Governor's office in Bridgeport, provides information about trade opportunities and helps match Israeli and Connecticut companies that are interested in cooperative ventures.

One good way to break into the Israeli market is through a joint venture with an Israeli company. Funding for such projects is available from the **Binational Industrial Research and Development Foundation (BIRD)**. **BIRD** funds projects in 36 states and the District of Columbia and hundreds of companies including AOL, GE, BP Solar, Texas Instruments and Johnson & Johnson have benefitted from **BIRD** grants.

The United States and Israel established **BIRD** in 1977 to fund joint U.S.-Israeli teams in the development and subsequent commercialization of innovative, nondefense technological products from which both the Israeli and American company can expect to

derive benefits commensurate with the investments and risks. Most grant recipients are small businesses involved with software, instrumentation, communications, medical devices and semiconductors.

Since its inception, **BIRD** has funded more than 800 joint high-tech R&D projects through conditional grants totaling more than \$210 million. Products developed from these ventures have generated more than \$8 billion in direct and indirect revenues for both countries and has helped to create an estimated 20,000 American jobs. Dr. Eli Oppen, the former Israeli chair of **BIRD**, has said that **BIRD** is a strong pillar of US-Israel industrial cooperation and that the extreme success of **BIRD** has led Israel to adopt similar models of R&D with other countries.

Several Connecticut companies have benefited from **BIRD** grants, including Alcide Corp., Executone Information Systems, Lansco, Micromint, TranSwitch Corp., General DataComm, Timex, Presstek and MacDermid. Connecticut's **BIRD** recipients to companies total nearly \$2 million.

In 2011, Hydrofera, based out of Willimantic, was awarded funding through the **BIRD** Foundation to team up with the Israeli-based company ART Healthcare in order to develop a device to reduce infections in intensive care units. This grant was part of over \$8 million awarded by **BIRD** to nine new projects with companies across both the US and Israel in 2011.

One **BIRD** annual report highlighted a project between Middlebury-based General DataComm Industries, a leading provider of communications networks, and Orckit, an Israeli company in the forefront of Highbitrate Digital Subscriber Line (HDSL) technology. Orckit's technical capabilities and experience designing products to meet both American and European standards attracted GDC's attention. The products they are jointly developing will allow worldwide carriers to improve and expand telecommunication services without major investments in infrastructure, such as fiberoptic cabling, according to the report.

MacDermid of Waterbury has had several **BIRD** grants for joint ventures with its Israeli subsidiary. One successful project was the development of a photoresist, which is used in the semiconductor industry to help make smaller and finer components. The latest grant

is to produce an improved photoresist for printed circuit boards, the platform on which computer chips are mounted. Jurgen Diekmann, director of imaging systems, said the grants are a catalyst for projects because they reduce the risk of undertaking new and costly ventures.

Dr. Daniel Upp has used the **BIRD** grant to TranSwitch Corp. to accelerate the development of a new integrated circuit chip. This technology will be used by manufacturing firms that make transmission equipment for telephone companies.

With help from **BIRD** grants in 2010, VCortex Ltd. (Kiryat Gat, Israel) and Presstek Inc. (Greenwich) will combine their capabilities to design an automatic color control for digital printing, leading to more capable and more productive digital press.

Scientific Innovations [top](#)

Connecticut researchers are making scientific breakthroughs and developing cutting-edge technologies in joint projects with Israeli scientists thanks to support from the **Binational Science Foundation (BSF)**. **BSF** was established in 1972 to promote scientific relations and cooperation between scientists from the United States and Israel. The fund supports collaborative research projects in a wide area of basic and applied scientific field for peaceful and non-profit purposes. Since its inception, **BSF** has awarded some \$480 million through more than 4,000 grants in 45 states and the District of Columbia.

BSF-sponsored studies are highly successful in achieving their two main goals: strengthening the US-Israel partnership through science and promoting world-class scientific research for the benefit of the two countries and all mankind. The **BSF** grants help extend research resources to achieve milestones that might not otherwise be attainable; introduce novel approaches and techniques to lead American researchers in new directions; confirm, clarify and intensify research projects; and provide unmatched access to Israeli equipment, facilities and research results that help speed American scientific advances. **BSF** has documented no less than 75 new discoveries made possible by its research grants and counts 37 Nobel Prize and 19 Lasker Medical Award laureates among its joint partners.

Scientists in Connecticut have shared with their counterparts in Israel

more than \$5.6 million in **BSF** grants awarded since 1996 alone. Yale and the University of Connecticut are among the grant recipients.

Jeffrey Kocsis is a professor of neurology at Yale Medical School doing research on proteins that are believed to be related to types of pain associated with secondary nerve injuries. He said that surgeons find that, for example, after an amputation a patient's pain goes away temporarily, but then returns later. He is trying to understand the cause of that pain so that eventually drugs might be developed to alleviate it.

"I can't emphasize enough how wonderful the **BSF** program is," Kocsis said. "It fosters collaboration that would not otherwise occur and made possible an exchange of visits with my colleague that has led to a number of publications."

The Yale Child Studies Center has had extensive collaboration with counterparts in Israel, according to Robert King. He was a scholar-in-residence at "a wonderful place" in Jerusalem run by B'nai B'rith Women, called the Residential Treatment Center, which offers residential care and psychotherapeutic treatment to severely emotionally disturbed boys.

The project he is working on with a **BSF** grant looks at traits in adolescents related to physical pain and suicide. Israel has a much lower suicide rate than the United States, according to King. Israelis are not as likely to abuse alcohol or suffer from conduct disorders. They do, however, feel tremendous pressure to be high achievers and those who think they have failed may be more prone to suicide. He has also found that Israelis who are more tolerant of pain are more prone to suicide. "Each year, the army screens every adolescent in Israel," King said, "and this provides a rich source of information that allows us to prospectively study how kids with certain traits adapt."

Yale geneticist Kenneth Kidd is trying to identify a gene for inherited deafness that will make it possible to offer genetic counseling to treat the condition. The **BSF** grant has allowed his colleague to study a large number of genetic markers, which have been passed on to his lab for further analysis. "The more hands working on the project, the faster it goes," he said.

Researchers Aner Shalev from the Hebrew University in Jerusalem along with Efim Zelmanov at Yale University in New Haven,

understood that the sequencing of certain events is important. Using both Lie algebra and the Abelian group in their research, Shalev and Zelmanov hope to discover new findings that can be applied to the fields of physics, economics, and biology. Lie algebra consists of a group of elements in which there is a commutator (the difference between the process of a group of events in one sequence and then again in the opposite sequence). In other words, in Lie algebra, the sequence of events changes the outcome. In an Abelian group, however, the sequence has no affect on the outcome of events and the commutator is zero.

General benefits to America from **BSF**sponsored studies include the extension and elaboration of research to achieve milestones that might not have been reached otherwise; the introduction of novel thinking and techniques that led American researchers to move in new directions and early access to Israeli research results that sped American scientific advances.

Agriculture Benefits ^{top}

In 1978 the United States and Israel jointly created the **Binational Agricultural Research and Development Fund (BARD)** to help fund programs between US and Israeli scientists for mutually beneficial, mission-oriented, strategic and applied research into agricultural problems. Since its inception, **BARD** has funded more than 1,000 projects in 45 states and the District of Columbia with a total investment of more than \$250 million. In 2000, an independent and external economic review of 10 **BARD** projects conservatively projected more than \$700 million in revenue by the end of 2010, a number which far outweighs the total investment in all **BARD** projects over its 33 year existence and helps to continually strengthen the foundation.

Most **BARD** projects focus on either increasing agricultural productivity, plant and animal health or food quality and safety and have been influential in creating new technologies in drip irrigation, pesticides, fish farming, livestock, poultry, disease control and farm equipment. **BARD** funds projects in 45 states and the District of Columbia and at present is beginning to administer collaborative efforts between Australia, Canada and Israel as well. It is difficult to

break down the impact on a state-by-state basis, but overall, **BARD**-sponsored research has generated sales of more than \$500 million, tax revenues of more than \$100 million and created more than 5,000 American jobs. Connecticut institutions, including the University of Connecticut and Yale University have shared grants worth more than \$1.2 million since 1979.

Richard Crain, a professor of molecular and cell biology at the University of Connecticut at Storrs has received grants from both **BARD** and BSF. One project involves the investigation of what regulates the aging process (for example, why leaves lose their green color) in plants. The longterm application would be to develop improved methods for storing vegetables to retard the aging process.

A second project looks at plant responses to environmental changes. Crain wants to understand, for example, why some plants wilt easily. The study, he said, applies to plant reactions to conditions such as drought, changing light and variations in salt content.

The grants allow Crain to travel to Israel, which is important for allowing him to interact and exchange ideas with his colleagues. **BARD** also allowed him to hire a graduate student to work in the lab for three years. And, most important, the collaboration results in prestigious publications.

A project with implications outside Connecticut involves the study of cow reproduction. Bob Milvae of U Conn is studying structures in the ovary of cows to try to understand the biochemical messages that determine whether a calf will develop. Dairy cows only produce milk after having calves. Ideally, cows would give birth every 12 months, but today the interval is 14 months and the two-month difference costs the dairy industry millions of dollars. Milvae hopes his research will help bridge the gap.

Milvae's research may also have important implications for humans, such as understanding why women have early, spontaneous abortions even if an embryo is healthy. "I couldn't do the research without funding from **BARD**," Milvae said, adding that he and his collaborator have different techniques and labs and therefore benefit from looking at the problem from different perspectives.

An earlier **BARD** project conducted by researchers at Yale, Israel's Kimron Veterinary Institute and the USDA Plum Island Animal

Diseases Center in New York, developed a test for Rift Valley Fever. This test has improved detection of a virus that infects cattle, sheep and humans in many developing countries.

Other Cooperative Programs ^{top}

Central Connecticut State University recently launched an innovative learning partnership with leading universities in Israel as part of its international course curriculum and study-abroad opportunities.

Sister Cities: ^{top}

CONNECTICUT	
..... ISRAEL	
<u>New Haven</u>	<u>Afula - Gilboa</u>

UJA Partnership 2000 Communities:

CONNECTICUT	
..... ISRAEL	
Bridgeport	Afula - Ta'anach - Gilboa
Danbury	Afula - Ta'anach - Gilboa
Greenwich	Afula - Ta'anach - Gilboa
Hartford	Afula - Ta'anach - Gilboa
Stamford	Afula - Ta'anach - Gilboa
Waterbury	Afula - Ta'anach - Gilboa
Westport	Afula - Ta'anach - Gilboa

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CHAPTER 588i

CONNECTICUT-ISRAEL EXCHANGE COMMISSION

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Sec. 32-180. Connecticut-Israel Exchange Commission. Membership.

Organization. (a) There is established the Connecticut-Israel Exchange Commission. The commission shall be within the Department of Economic and Community Development for the purpose of promoting and expanding economic, scientific, educational, technological, commercial, industrial and cultural cooperation and exchange between the state of Connecticut and the state of Israel.

(b) The Connecticut-Israel Exchange Commission shall be comprised of: (1) The Governor, the speaker of the House of Representatives, the president pro tempore of the Senate, the majority leader of the House of Representatives, the majority leader of the Senate, the minority leader of the House of Representatives, the minority leader of the Senate, or their designees, and the cochairmen and ranking members of the joint standing committees of the General Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to economic development and education; (2) the Commissioner of Economic and Community Development, or his designee; (3) two public members appointed by the Governor; and (4) two members appointed by the speaker of the House of Representatives, two members appointed by the president pro tempore of the Senate, two members appointed by the minority leader of the House of Representatives and two members appointed by the minority leader of the Senate. Of the members appointed under subdivision (4) of this subsection, each appointing authority shall appoint one member from the public and one member from the General Assembly. The Governor shall appoint from among the members of the commission a chairperson who shall serve in that capacity at the pleasure of the Governor.

(c) The first appointments shall be made on or before July 1, 1988. The term of each appointed member shall be coterminous with the appointing authority or until a successor is chosen, whichever is longer. Vacancies shall be filled by the appointing

authority.

(d) The members of the commission shall receive no compensation for their services but shall be reimbursed for any reasonable and necessary expenses incurred in the performance of their duties.

(e) The commission shall organize itself in such manner as it deems desirable and necessary. Seven members of the commission shall constitute a quorum and the affirmative vote of a majority of the members present at a meeting shall be necessary to take any action or adopt any motion or resolution.

(P.A. 88-209, S. 1, 4; P.A. 95-250, S. 1; P.A. 96-211, S. 1, 5, 6.)

History: P.A. 95-250 and P.A. 96-211 replaced Commissioner and Department of Economic Development with Commissioner and Department of Economic and Community Development.

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Sec. 32-181. Powers and functions. The commission shall have the following powers and functions:

(1) To request and obtain from any department, board, commission or other agency of the state or of any municipality, authority or other political subdivision within the state such assistance and data as will enable it to carry out the purposes of this chapter;

(2) To accept any federal funds granted for all or any of the purposes of this chapter;

(3) To accept any gifts, donations, bequests or grants of funds from private and public agencies for all or any of the purposes of this chapter;

(4) To create committees necessary for the performance of responsibilities pursuant to this chapter and to appoint members thereto;

(5) To work with representatives from the state of Israel in forming a counterpart to the commission in the state of Israel;

(6) To work with its counterpart organization in the state of Israel and with the

business, financial and academic communities in the state to encourage and schedule visits, conferences and exchanges between the state and the state of Israel concerning industrial development, commerce and trade, culture, science and technology, medicine and health care research and education; and

(7) To perform such other acts as may be necessary and appropriate to promote mutual prosperity, development and understanding between the state of Connecticut and the state of Israel.

(P.A. 88-209, S. 2, 4.)

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Sec. 32-182. Assistance from the Department of Economic and Community Development. Contributions from private agencies. The Department of Economic and Community Development may provide the necessary personnel and resources as provided in this section to help the commission perform its tasks in accordance with the provisions of this chapter. If the commission receives monetary contributions or contributions of in-kind resources from private agencies during any state fiscal year, the department shall allocate an amount of money to the commission equal to one-third of the total value of all such contributions and resources provided such allocation does not exceed seventy thousand dollars in any state fiscal year. In addition, the department may continue to provide the in-kind resources to the commission which it is providing on July 1, 1998. Any such contributions, allocations and resources shall be used by the commission to establish an office to develop strategic business relationships between Connecticut and Israeli businesses.

(P.A. 88-209, S. 3, 4; P.A. 93-140, S. 2, 3; P.A. 95-250, S. 1; P.A. 96-211, S. 1, 5, 6; P.A. 98-203, S. 11, 13.)

History: P.A. 93-140 allowed, instead of required, department to provide personnel and resources to commission, required department to match contributions and stipulated purpose for contributions and matching resources, effective July 1, 1993; P.A. 95-250 and P.A. 96-211 replaced Commissioner and Department of Economic Development with Commissioner and Department of Economic and Community Development; P.A. 98-203 made the allocation of funds to the commission mandatory and authorized additional in-kind assistance, effective July 1, 1998.